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AUTHOR	Thorson, Michael; Amoe, Ruth
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ABSTRACT

This is one of a series of units for environmental education developed by the Highline Public Schools. This unit is designed to direct intermediate grade pupils to positive attitudes and actions in the preservation of their environment. The culminating activity is the construction and placement of positive ecology signs. The goals of this unit are to: (1) foster positive ecological attitudes; (2) become involved in community action; and (3) use elementary construction methods and tools. The time suggested for the unit is three weeks. (RH)

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THORSON-AMOE PAK

By Michael Thorson
Ruth Amoe

An Environmental Learning Experience in construction of positive ecology signs stressing personal involvement, positive action, community interaction and career awareness; designed for intermediate grades. One of many "ELE PAKS" available for all areas.

Project ECOLogy, Title III ESEA
Highline Public Schools
Department of Instruction
P. O. Box 66100
Seattle, WA 98166
Phone: (206) 433-2453

SE 021 462

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How do you feel when you see a sign that says, "Parent must hold child's hand"? Compare that feeling with the attitude one gets from a sign that reads, "Please let your children touch. Touching is living. Let's all be alive," which appears in the Sasquatch Candle Shop in the Farmer's Market.

Have you ever noticed that most signs which are intended to preserve our environment are negative in nature?

KEEP OFF THE GRASS
DON'T BE A LITTER BUG
NO TRESPASSING

Do we really want to create a negative, restrictive feeling about the preservation of our environment? Negative attitudes tend to invite negative actions. No one pays much attention to a "Keep Off The Grass" sign, but who would walk on the fledgling grass at Western Washington State College where a sign reads, "The grass in this plot provides enough oxygen to allow 30 people to survive"?

OUTLINE

I. Background Information

II. Objectives

III. Materials

IV. Procedures

A few days before beginning

A. Let's Get Into It! - Motivation

1. Put up strategic positive and negative signs
2. Watch for reactions

The First Week

B. Working It Out Together! - Class Involvement

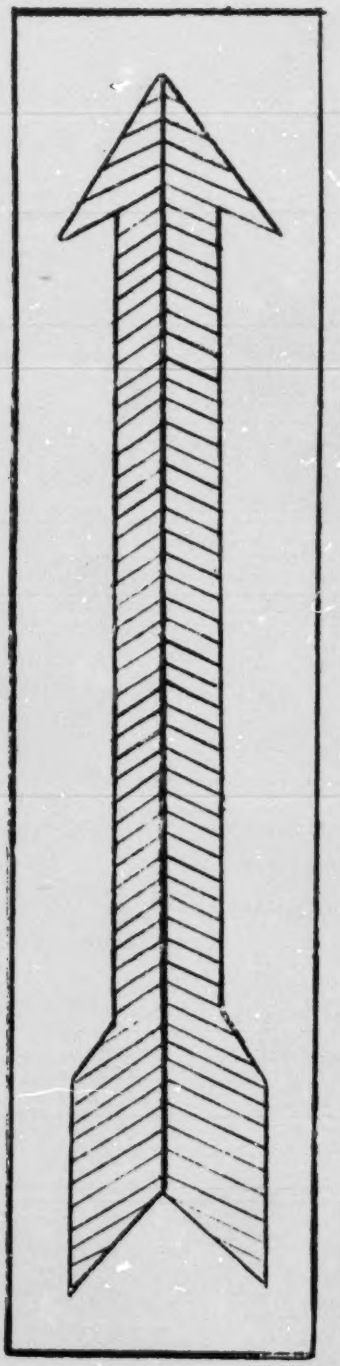
1. Class Discussion - daily
   a. their feelings about your signs
   b. their reactions and feelings about common signs
   c. necessity of signs - types
   d. how signs affect people
      1. message
      2. size
      3. shape
      4. design appeal
      5. positive/negative approach

2. Looking for signs
   a. existing
   b. searching for places signs are needed
   c. mentally changing
   d. looking at specifics
      1. materials
      2. construction
      3. design measurements

3. Find out how signs are made
   a. form questions you want answered
   b. speakers
   c. research

4. Arrange for materials
   a. donations of materials
      1. community/home
      2. highway department
      3. businesses
      4. school district
      5. paint and building contractors

   b. ways to finance
      1. money-making projects
      2. donations - class, student body
      3. P.T.A.
      4. slush fund
      5. party fund



The Second Week

C. Groups Doing Their Own Thing - Work Crews

1. Form working groups
   a. working procedures
   b. guidelines

2. Getting started
   a. selecting a location
   b. choosing a saying
   c. obtaining permission

3. Designing the sign
   a. stages of development
   b. things to consider

4. Design sketch
   a. materials
   b. experiment with ideas
   c. decide on a final sketch

5. Mock-up
   a. materials
   b. procedures
   c. try it out

The Third Week

D. Putting It All Together - Construct Signs

1. Making the signs
   a. materials
   b. tools
   c. procedures

2. Erect signs

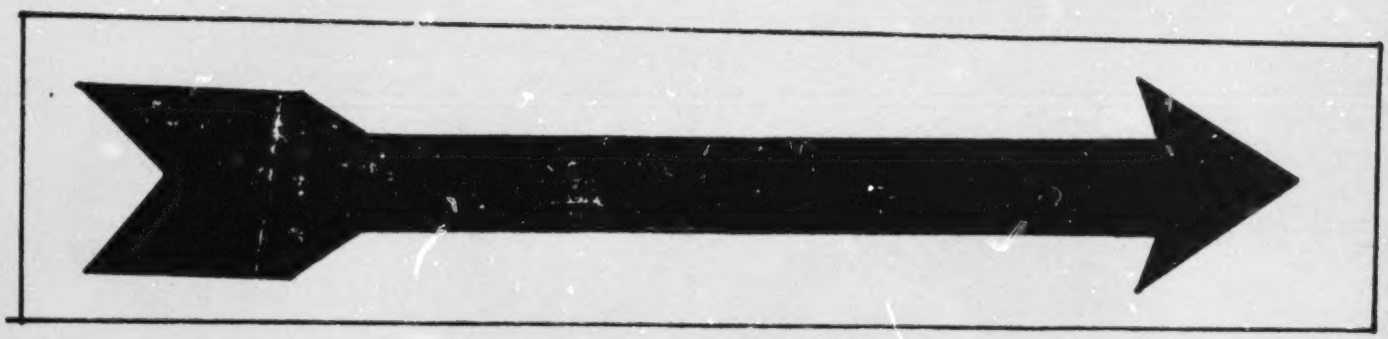
E. Follow-up Activities

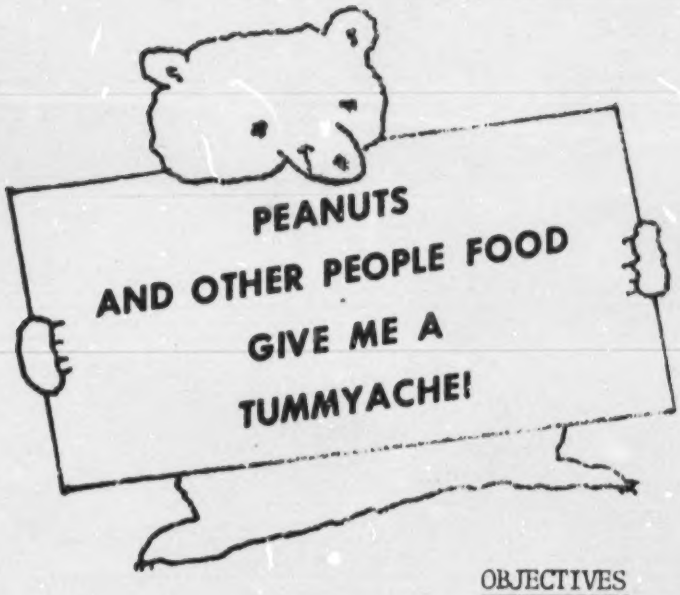
F. Evaluation

1. Attitudinal testing

2. Comprehensive testing

3. Teacher appraisal - How did it go?





OBJECTIVES

The Thorson-Amoe Environmental Learning Package is designed to direct your children to positive attitudes and actions in the preservation of our environment. The culminating activity is the construction and placement of positive ecology signs.

The goals of this learning unit are to:

1. foster positive ecological attitudes
2. become involved in community action
3. use elementary construction methods and tools

In this package you and your children will:

1. explore people's reaction to signs
2. compare positive and negative suggestions
3. become acquainted with appropriate governmental agencies
4. involve the community in positive action
5. become aware of related occupations
6. encourage creative thinking
7. design an imaginative ecological sign
8. work in groups
9. construct signs
10. place signs in appropriate places
11. evaluate the project

MATERIALS

Kit Supplies

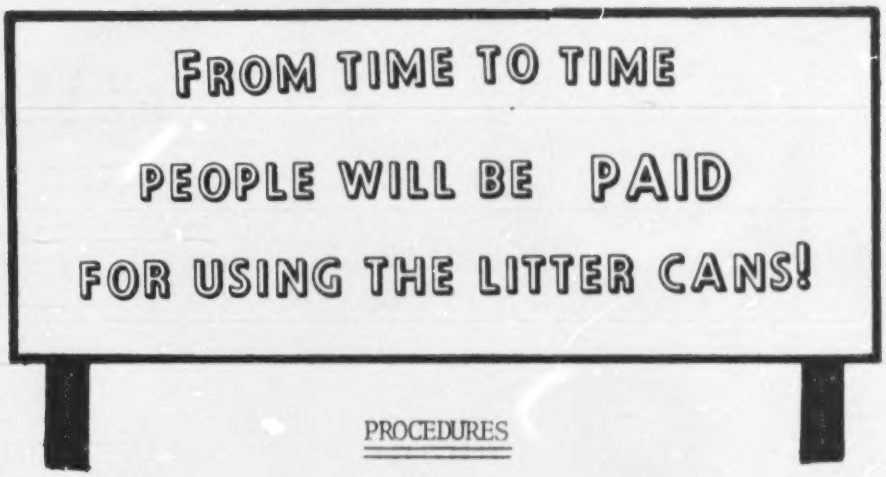
10 Crosscut saws
10 24" Tri squares
10 Wood files
5 small surforms
1 Brace with 5/16" bit
30 Lettering brushes
Sandpaper (assorted)
Lettering stencils

Your school may have a tool cart which is secured from the district on a permanent basis. The cart usually is outfitted with enough elementary tools for a classroom to complete any woodworking project. If you do not have a tool cart, this is a good time to begin putting one together or getting in mind the desirable tools for future ordering. You will find woodworking satisfying and a valuable learning experience when integrated with the rest of the curriculum rather than as an isolated entity.

You will need to provide for:

motivation signs
newsprint for design sketches
exterior paint (assorted colors)
newspapers to cover work areas
tape measures
masking tape
pencils
nylon tip pens (fine point)
rulers
construction paper (assorted colors to match paint)
tagboard, railroad board, poster board, or large size construction paper for mock-ups
rubber cement
scissors

	Approximate Price
4' x 8' sheet of AC exterior plywood	$9.00 to $10.00
4" x 4" fir for posts (if used)	40¢ per foot
4 1/2" x 5/16" bolts with nuts (if used)	$5.50 for 50



PROCEDURES

A. LET'S GET INTO IT - MOTIVATION

Basic Idea: You subtly make the children aware of their attitudes toward positive and negative signs.

Several days before introducing this unit to your class place a few pertinent positive and negative signs around your room, halls or school grounds. Give the children time to become aware of and react to the signs. Make the signs conspicuous in design and ideas. Be careful about overdoing it in numbers - too much of a good thing could kill it.

For a comparative reaction, try changing the positive signs to negative attitudes and the negative suggestions to positive.

Suggestions:

Positive	Negative
Be patient. You will be able to sit on our baby grass when it is all grown up.	Keep off the new grass
15 days free of running in the hall	Walk - Don't Run
Pet me. Touching is loving and I love you.	Do not handle the animals
Smell and admire for I am beautiful.	Do not touch the plants
Peanuts and other people food give me a tummyache.	Do not feed the animals
This tree provides enough oxygen for 100 people to live " home for birds " shade " lumber	Stay off the trees

WEEK I

During this week you will have several things going simultaneously:

daily class discussions
independent searching and observations
outside speakers to add expertise
research may be needed

B. WORKING IT OUT TOGETHER - CLASS INVOLVEMENT

Your class is already involved in this activity whether they know if or not. If they are in tune with our era of signs, they will probably be aware of the fact that you have been trying to manipulate their actions through the use of positive and negative signs. This leads you easily into action. No further motivation is necessary. Discuss their feelings with them.

If they need more motivation:

If they haven't been aware of the purpose of the signs you might cite statistics that you gathered of how effective your signs were. (Plant sign - 2 people touched the plant when using the positive sign; 14 people touched when using the negative sign). You might want to begin a wall chart that they can become involved in helping you tally as they discover what you are doing.

More motivation needed?

For a group that really needs to be jolted into action, try a large screaming sign clear across the room (chalkboard or butcher paper).

Examples:

STOP POLLUTION

Compare that to a softer approach:

"Pollution Hurts"

Class Discussions

In a class discussion you will want to explore:

A. Their feelings about signs
   1. How they felt about your signs.
   2. What did they want to do about each when they saw it?
   3. Why they felt as they did?
   4. Other signs they have positive and/or negative feelings about.
   5. What they think makes them like or dislike a sign.

B. Necessity of signs
   1. The why of signs
   2. Types of signs
      a. not to do something
      b. to do something
      c. to do something carefully

C. How signs cause an effect upon people
   1. The way the message is presented
      a. lettering types
      b. coloring
      c. wording or logograms (silloutte pictures)
   2. The appeal of the design
   3. Clarity of message
   4. Positive or negative approach

Looking for Signs

The class discussion will start the children looking for signs and lead to other discussions. You will want to allow a time everyday for them to share their findings and ideas. They will become aware of ones that they have never noticed before (Why?) and they will be conscious of whether the sign has a positive or negative affect upon them. Can't you see them discussing the psychology of particular signs they see while on a family outing? They may want to poll the members of their families to get a more reliable testing variable.

Lead them to searching for places where signs need to be placed (safety, preservation of environment, pointing out an aesthetic gem). Keep a list of places they suggest so that they will have some choices when it comes time for each working group to decide upon a sign and placement.

When the children share their observations in class you will find them already mentally changing the signs to be more effective. Have them write down particularly appealing ideas for later references.

As an independent activity, have the children looking for specifics in signs.

1. What materials are used?
2. How are they constructed for longevity?
3. What designs are most appealing?
4. Estimate measurements of well-planned signs.

Find Out How Signs Are Made

This is the time for the children to test the reliability of their sign observations. They can test their theories against the expertise of professionals through outside speakers or in research studies. This saves them the time and energy of having to time-test each of their ideas.

Whether seeking information from speakers or research materials, the children would benefit from making a list of questions they want answered. This is a courtesy to a speaker as it hones him in on exactly what is needed and saves his having to cover the whole realm hoping to hit on what is needed. Pre-questions in researching helps direct the students work to save them time and effort.

Possible Speakers

1. Highway Department - King County Dept. of Traffic and Planning
2. Art teachers
3. Advertising designers
4. Independent sign companies

Research Possibilities

1. Design books
2. Lettering books
3. Bulletin board ideas
4. Advertising materials
5. Perusing magazines for advertising techniques

Arrange for Materials

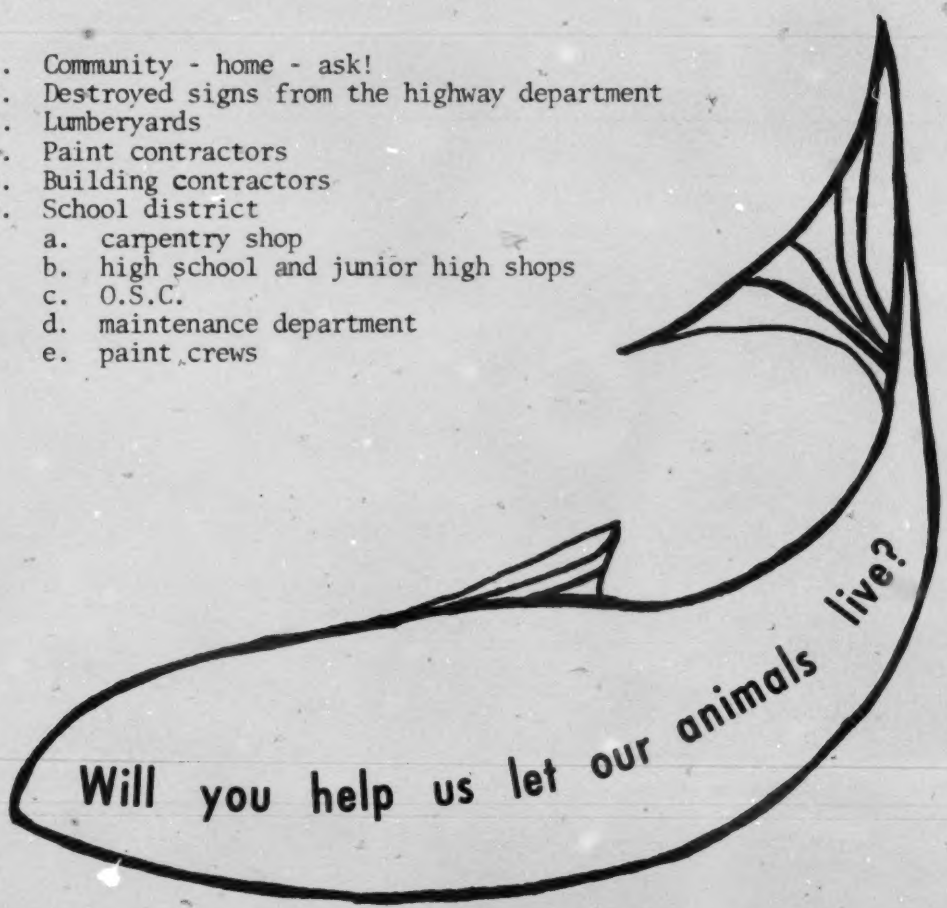
The first thing you probably thought when you discovered that this PAK was aimed at constructing signs was, "Where on earth will I get all of that wood and paint?!" Right? Don't sweat it!! Let the children do it. That may sound flippant and facetious but think about it a minute.

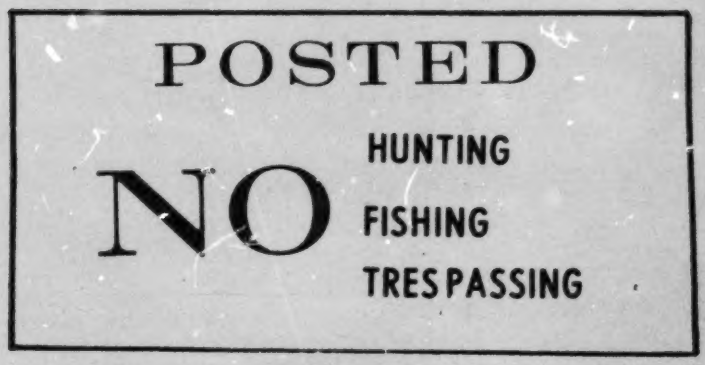
One of the prime objectives of this PAK is to involve the children in positive action in the preservation of their environment. One of the best things we can do for children is to allow them to become independent, resourceful, innovative and inventive. Figuring out how to get materials is a valuable learning experience.

Another objective of this PAK is to get the community involved in this positive action. The children will get them involved. Not only will they seek aid and information from those around them in their immediate community but they will have to seek assistance in other places which will direct their attention to various occupations, careers and businesses.

There are many places that surplus materials are available as a donation.

1. Community - home - ask!
2. Destroyed signs from the highway department
3. Lumberyards
4. Paint contractors
5. Building contractors
6. School district
   a. carpentry shop
   b. high school and junior high shops
   c. O.S.C.
   d. maintenance department
   e. paint crews





Ways to Finance

Now how to get the money that you might need for things that are not donated to you outright. There are ways and ways and ways!

Donations

Class - The class may want to donate their party fund money. They might want to take up a collection in the room.
Student Body - The student body may want to donate to your project.
P.T.A. - Your friendly P.T.A. is always looking for ways to invest their funds to improve the school community.
School - Does your school use a slush fund for such projects?

Projects

Quick and Easy:

Popcorn Sale - Advertise heavily the day before the sale. The afternoon of the sale have your students work in groups to pop, bag and organize. Have the sale after school - 10¢ a bag. It's a big money-maker!
Bake Sale - Advertise the day before. The children bring cupcakes, cookies, etc. they baked and wrapped individually at home. Check your health standards in your school for this one.
Lollipop Sale - Your class makes and wraps lollipops the day before the sale. Naturally advertise.

Need a little longer:

White Elephant Sale - children collect and donate articles and organize
Paperback Book Sale - a sale. Form working groups for various jobs.
Craft Sale - Children donate articles they have made in or out of school
Plant Sale - Good spring project. Most plants would be donated from home but some can come from nurseries. Advertise widely in the community.
Pancake breakfast - Form a corporation and have a large breakfast. Exciting!

Longer Range:

Borrow the money and pay it back later having a money-making project some time later. Form a finance committee that is a cross-section of the working groups to go to the proper people to secure a loan. Make sure they know exactly what the aim of the sign project is, how much money is needed, details of money-making project, when they can repay. Try the local bank, school slush fund or P.T.A.

THIS AREA WAS DEVELOPED BY THE 6th GRADE

WE LOVE IT

WEEK II

C. GROUPS DOING THEIR OWN THING

From this point on the students will be working in small groups (hopefully with 2-4 students per group). The group work and production guidelines are written directly to the students.

Form Working Groups

Your group will construct and erect one sign using the following steps:

1. select a location for the sign
2. decide on what it should say
3. obtain permission to put up the sign
4. work on design sketches
5. prepare a mock-up and time-test it
6. construct the sign
7. work with a parent or community group to put up the sign

While working as a group you will need to:

1. pick a leader
2. cooperate, contribute, and compromise
3. make the decisions necessary to have your sign finished and erected within the time allowed.

GETTING STARTED

The first three steps in this process really go together. Deciding on a location and saying for your sign and obtaining the permission to erect it all must be done before you get involved in actually designing the sign.

Perhaps in your scouting the area you have already discovered some places that could use a good positive ecology sign. If you have, get together with your group and work on some slogans and logograms that would be appropriate for the areas and then pick the one that you feel will be most effective. If you can't think of a good location or a saying to go with it you may need to use some of your after school time to scout the area again.

Getting permission to put up the sign will depend on the location you have chosen. Find out who is responsible for the property. If it is under the jurisdiction of the King County Department of Traffic and Planning you will have to call that office and find out about restrictions and specifications and secure permission from a representative of that department. If it is on school property make an appointment with the principal and explain your project with him. If you have chosen a location that is on private property you will need to follow this same procedure with the owner.

In all three cases, be prepared to explain the project to them. They need to understand the reasons for your sign and its expected effect. Remember that you are hoping to do something worthwhile for our environment and our lives within it.

DESIGNING THE SIGN

The production of the signs will take place in three steps:

A. design sketches
B. mock-up
C. construction

While working on these three stages take into consideration:

A. Where the sign will be located
   1. which colors will show up best?
   2. what size and style lettering would be most effective?
   3. what overall size would be best for the sign?
B. Is there some age group or particular type of person to whom the sign is directed?
   1. what kind of words will be necessary?
   2. should the sign have pictures or logograms?
C. Aim for simplicity, otherwise it may not be read
D. Make sure your meaning is clear
E. Is the sign as positive as you can get it while still doing the job for which it was intended?

Design Sketch

Materials:

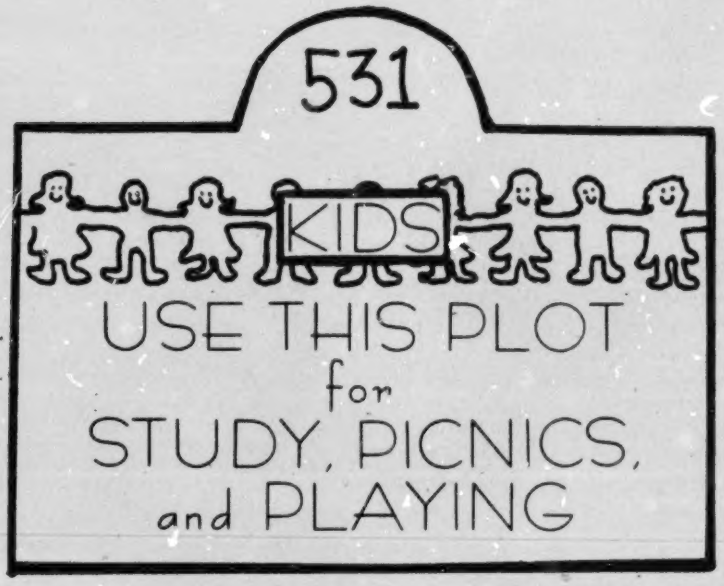
Drawing paper or newsprint
pencils
colored pencils
nylon tip pens (overhead projector or Flair type)
rulers

After your group has decided what your sign is going to say or show make some experimental sketches of the proposed sign. Play around with various shapes for the sign and different color schemes. Design several logograms that might be appropriate for the sign and try out a sampling of lettering styles.

Work in your group to draw up a sign using the best suggestions from each student's sketches.

When you are all satisfied you can begin work on the mock-up.

Mock-Up



Materials:

backing for the sign:
tagboard,
railroad board,
poster board, or
large construction paper
assorted colors of construction paper
rubber cement
scissors
pencils
tri squares
letter stencils

1. Make your mock-up the actual size of the finished sign. Use tri squares and pencils to make it as accurate as possible.
2. Cut out the backing that you have just measured.
3. When all the groups have completed these two steps work together to be sure that all the signs could be cut from one sheet of 4' x 8' plywood. If there seems to be no way to arrange them to fit, make whatever modifications are necessary in individual signs. When this has been taken care of continue with the mock-ups.
4. Use the stencils to draw the letters you will need for your sign on to whatever color construction paper you have decided upon. Cut them out carefully.
5. If you will be using a logogram or picture draw or paint a mock-up of it and cut it out.
6. Spend some time trying various arrangements to see which is the most effective.
7. When the whole group is satisfied glue the letters, pictures, and any designs to the backing.
8. Place the mock-up someplace somewhere in the room or hallway where you can see it for the next few days. During this time you can observe it to see if it really conveys the message and feeling you were attempting to achieve and also watch to see how other people react to it. If you are unsatisfied you can always make changes now. It is easier to do it with the mock-up than with a partially completed sign. You will also be sure that you are going to end up with a sign that will satisfy you.

WEEK III

D. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER - CONSTRUCTION

Making Signs

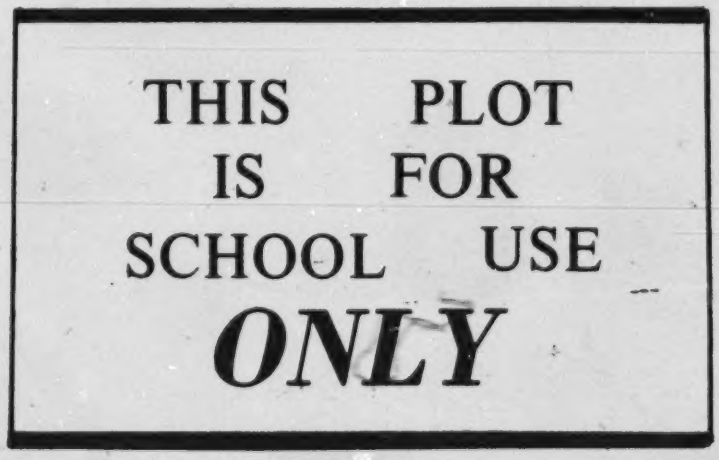
Materials:

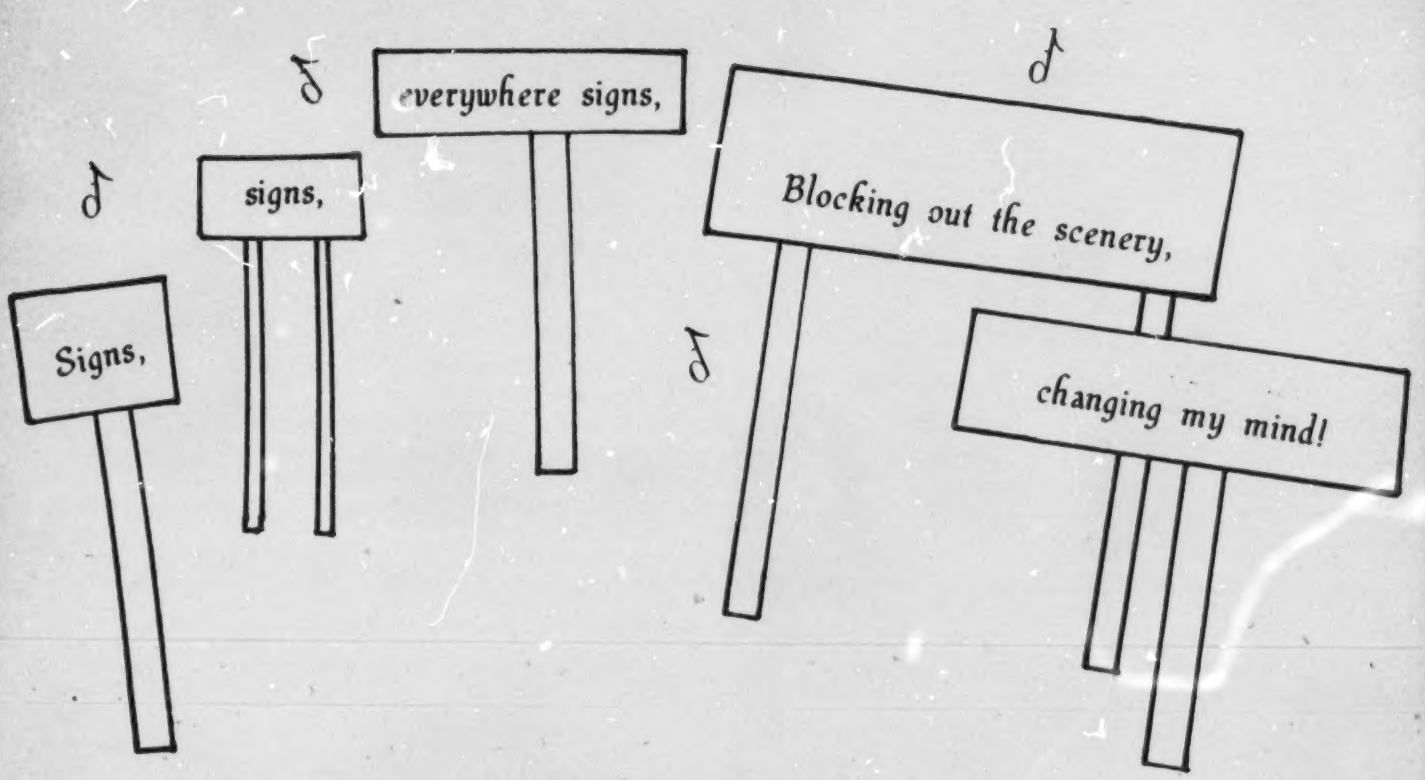
4' x 8' sheet of AC exterior plywood
exterior paint in a variety of colors
masking tape
lettering stencils
white butcher paper
sandpaper

Tools:

crosscut saws
tri squares
pencils
brace and 5/16" bit
wood files
surforms

1. Each group make a butcher paper pattern of the size and shape they want their sign to be.
2. Fit the patterns onto the plywood sheet so that they will all fit. Work with the layout so that is done the way that will make it easiest to cut.
3. Draw around the patterns using tri squares to make it as accurate as you can. Be sure to allow for the loss that will occur because of the saw cutting.
4. Use crosscut saws to cut out the signs.
5. Measure for the two bolt holes and mark them with a pencil. These will be used to secure the sign to the post or building.
6. Use a bit and brace to drill the holes.
7. Use surforms, and wood files to smooth the cut edges, rounding the corners off gently, then sand until smooth with various grades of sandpaper.
8. Clean off all sawdust and paint the plywood with the background color of your sign. This will probably have to be done in two stages.
9. Using your mock-up for reference and stencils and tri squares as a guides, pencil on the guide lines and the lettering.
10. Letters may be done in two ways: 1. draw around the stencils and hand paint the letters using lettering brushes and a steady hand. 2. use an over-stencil that has the letter cut out. Hold the stencil down and apply paint carefully with brush or spray.



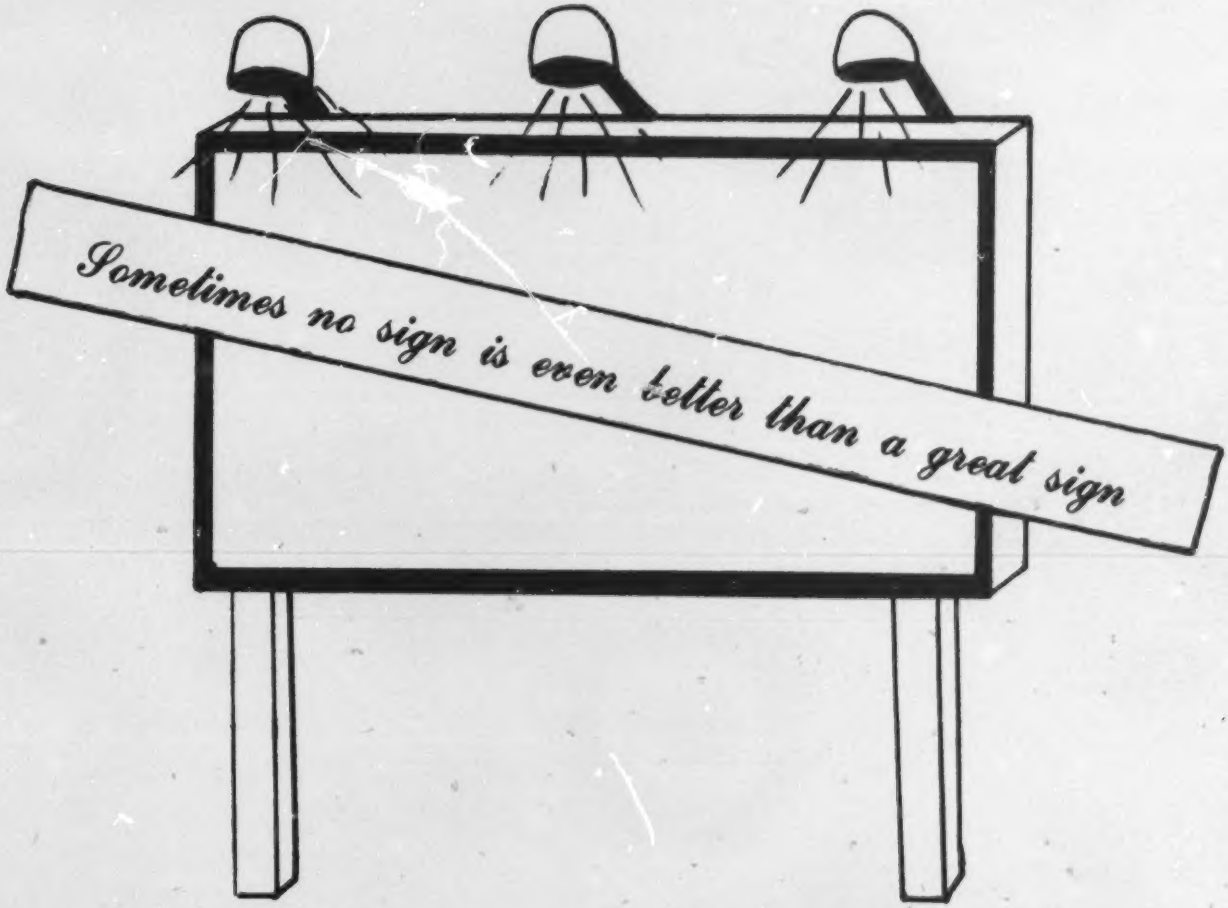


Erecting the Signs

How the sign is to be put up depends upon the location chosen for each of the signs. Perhaps it could be bolted to the side of a building. It may be that it could be attached to a fence or an existing sign with bolts, heavy gauge wire, or clips.

Probably the most exciting way would be to use teams of parents, other community members, and students to erect the signs. This would involve getting the 4" x 4" wood posts,* cutting them to size, bolting the signs to them, digging the holes, and filling them in so that the sign is straight and secure. It's a good chance for the community members to feel a part of the school, work and talk with the students, and visit over coffee, punch and cookies after the job is done. Not only would the community members help the students and appreciate their effort in the environmental campaign, but the signs would afterward have a special meaning and effectiveness for them.

*Both the Seattle and King County sign departments discard 4" x 4" sign posts that have been knocked over or broken and are too short for their regulation signs. This might be a good place to get the posts and avoid the 40¢ per foot cost. Terrific recycling!



E. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Statistical sampling of effectiveness of signs
2. Maintenance of signs
3. Giant posters of construction paper, using a motto theme and picture